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Note verbale dated 20 July 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations presents its compliments to the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, and has the honour to enclose the following statement made today by Mr. Alon Bar, Representative of Israel at the Conference.

At the outset, let me convey my delegation's warmest congratulations to Ambassador Reyes for his patience, guidance and extensive efforts which have enabled us to reach the agreed text of the Programme of Action.

Israel welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This important document reflects the serious manner in which the international community views the problem of the illicit manufacture, trade and transfer of small arms and the acute humanitarian problems caused and exacerbated by it. As individuals and States alike bear the grave consequences of terror and organized crime, which are fuelled and aided by illicit trafficking in small arms, ammunition and explosives, the efforts of the international community are both urgent and vital.

The Programme of Action is a major step, but by no means the final one to be undertaken by States. It is the hope of the Israeli delegation that the political obligations undertaken in this text will be implemented universally, sincerely and rapidly and that this dangerous phenomenon will be combated continuously, on a national and international level, with utmost diligence.

Israel, however, regrets and disassociates itself from the reference made in the Programme of Action to the principle of self-determination, which is aimed at serving the narrow political interests of certain participants. We believe that the reference made to this principle is outside the scope of the mandate of the Conference and could be mistaken as legitimization of the illicit traffic in small arms and their use, thus inducing terrorism on the pretext of self-determination.

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